513

Mrs. *ABIGAIL*;

OR, A

Female Skirmish

BETWEEN

The Wife of a *Country Squire*,

AND

The Wife of a *Doctor* in *Divinity*.

WITH

REFLECTIONS

THEREUPON.

In a Letter to a Friend.

LONDON,

Printed for *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*. 1700.

Price 4 *d*.

UMI

Mrs. *ABIGAIL:*

OR,

A Female Skirmiſh, *&c.*

SIR,

IT was with no ſmall ſatisfaction that I read yours of the 10*th* inſtant. I heartily congratulate your good ſucceſs, and have imparted it to the reſt of your Friends here, and we are all extremely well pleaſed with it. I was much ſurpriſed to find that the Report of the Female Skirmiſh, which ſo lately happened in our Pariſh, hath already ſpread it ſelf ſo far: and to ſatisfy the Curioſity you ſay you have to underſtand the matter at large, I have here given you a true Account of it, and ſome Remarks of my own thereupon.

Mr. *S.* my Neighbour is a Gentleman of near 1000 *l.* a year, deſcended to him from a long Series of Anceſtors; hath ſerved his King and Country in ſeveral eminent Stations, and married a Lady of an antient Family, who brought him ſeveral thouſand Pounds to her Portion.

Some years ſince there arrived in theſe parts a little diminutive Sir *John*, who had ſpent ſome time in the Univerſity, where he was a poor Scholar, and went on the Errands of ſeveral of the Gentlemen of his College; and with the help of that and the College-Broth, made a ſhift to pick up a ſorry Livelihood. His Father (while he lived) kept a blind Victualling-Houſe, and his Mother this day is a reverend Ale-wife: And tho his Friends were poor, and could no way help him, yet he got wherewith to take his degrees of Batchelor, and afterwards of Maſter of Arts.

He came hither in hopes of a ſmall Curacy under a fat Parſon of our Country, who had ſwallowed more Livings than he could well digeſt; but taking in too much Claret to help his Concoction, kicked up his heels ſoon after the arrival of our little *Dominus vobiſcum*, who by that means (in ſpite of the Proverb) might have died of Hunger, had not a Gentleman of Eſtate and Quality not far off, took this Prieſt-Errant into his Houſe, to initiate his Son in the Latin Tongue, where our *Sir John* performed all the ſpiritual Drudgeries of the Family, bleſſed the Meat with a ſingular good Grace, and had the honour of ſitting at the lower end of the Table, from whence (according to his bounden Duty) he always very mannerly aroſe at the ſerving in of the ſecond Courſe, and, with a Bow as low as to the Altar, took with him the Plate he had eat on: And in proceſs of time skrewing himſelf into the good Graces of Mrs. *Abigail* my Lady's waiting Woman, a Match was ſtruck up between them, and (with the good liking of their Maſter and Lady) they were coupled together; and the firſt

Living

Living that fell in his Maſter's Gift, was (according to the laudable Cuſtom where the Patron had been beforehand with the Chaplain) beſtowed upon him: which (tho a very good one, yet) did not ſatisfy him, but in a ſhort time up he comes for *London*, and having made an intereſt in ſome of the great ones, plies *Whitehal* without intermiſſion, Sunday it ſelf not excepted; on which morning conſtantly about 10 of the Clock, he never failed (together with a whole Herd of that Tribe, who were in town upon the like hunt) to be at *Mans Coffee-houſe*, to ſmoak away the remainder of that tedious Forenoon, which others (not ſo well skill'd in the new Crape-Divinity) ſpent in the Church. At length his Expectations were crowned with ſucceſs, and our *Sir John* (having duly capacitated himſelf) had another Living added to his former. On goes the Scarf, and down goes my Prieſt full fraught with Pride and Exultation. From henceforth his thoughts began to ſwell; and being now a Buttreſs broader, he would be a Story or two higher: To the Univerſity he trudges, and takes his Degree of Batchelor, and now lately of Doctor in Divinity.

He had not been long returned from thence, but Mr. *S.* his Lady, and Mrs. *Abigail* (our new Doctreſs) being with others of the Neighbourhood at a Country Entertainment, Madam *S.* being the beſt Woman in the Company, and not imagining any Perſon there would have diſputed Precedence with her, ſet her ſelf by the Miſtriſs of the Houſe at the upper end of the Table, ſo that there was no room left for Mrs. *Abigail*, but at one of the ſides. Down ſhe ſits, but with a full Stomach, not a bit went into her mouth; which the Miſtriſs of the Houſe obſerving, and taking notice of, Mrs. *Abigail* ſet up a hideous Outcry that her Quality

lity was injured, and read ſuch a Lecture upon the Dignity of the Clergy, and eſpecially of a Doctor in Divinity (and conſequently of his Doxy) that the Lady was amazed, and the Company burſt out into a loud Laughter. The Lady hath wit enough, and plied Mrs. *Abigail* with ſuch ſmart Repartees, that ſhe was put to ſilence ; but the Doctor being preſent, was ſo great a Coxcomb as to take up the Cudgels, and was encountred by a Gentleman of more ſenſe than himſelf, who drove the buſineſs ſo home, that the Doctor was quite nonpluſt. However, this Conteſt ſpoiled the intended Mirth, to the diſturbance of the whole Company ; ſince which Mrs. *Abigail* hath declined all Meetings where the Lady was to be, and intends to continue in this ſullen humor till the Quality of a Doctor in Divinity's Wife is here better underſtood.

This is the true matter of Fact, and now give me leave to examin upon what Juſtice or Right the Pretenſions of this *Sir John* and his Wife are founded.

As to the Husband, we will conſider him in both his capacities, of Prieſt and Doctor.

As to his Prieſthood, I ſee nothing in that which can intitle him to more than the Quality of an ordinary Gentleman (for that, as I take it, the common Courteſy of *England* allows him, as well as an Attorney, or Licentiat in Phyſick) and being only a Gentleman by his Profeſſion, he is inferior to him who is a Gentleman by Birth : As (to inſtance in the next degree upwards) an Eſquire by Office, as a Member of the Houſe of Commons, a Juſtice of Peace, who is (*quatenus* ſuch) inferior to an Eſquire by Birth, as the eldeſt Son of a Baronet or Knight : And if any one born

born a Gentleman gives precedence to the Pariſh Prieſt, 'tis more than is the Prieſt's due, and given of mere Courteſy; unleſs the Pariſh Prieſt be a Gentleman by Birth likewiſe, in which caſe the Precedence muſt be ruled by the common Notion among us, that where there be two Perſons of equal Birth or Quality, the Precedence ought to be given to him that hath the better Eſtate. And if the Gentleman Pariſh-Prieſt hath a Benefice of 200 *l. per annum*, and the Lay-Gentleman hath Lands of Inheritance but of 100 *l. per annum*, worth 20 years Purchaſe, the Lay-man hath doubtleſs the better Eſtate of the two; and if he gives Precedence to the Pariſh-Prieſt, it is of courteſy, and not of due.

I know it will be objected, That the Function of theſe Prieſts is ſacred; That they are bred up in the Schools of the Prophets, where they attain to the underſtanding and interpreting of the Holy Scriptures; That they are God's Ambaſſadors, and converſant all their Life-times about the Myſteries of Religion: All which eminently diſtinguiſhes them, and ſets them in a Rank ſuperior to that of other men.

But I cannot underſtand how theſe things can help them in the point we are upon, which concerns a Temporal Right. Was not Chriſt's and his Apoſtles Prieſthood and Function as ſacred as theirs? And yet he diſclaimed (for them as well as himſelf) all Temporal Superiority.

For their Education, It is not apparent that it is founded upon no deſign but what is common to other men, to feed and clothe them, and anſwer the common neceſſities of Life. Shew me a Father whoſe main and ultimat end in ſending his Son to this School

School of the Prophets in order to the Prieſthood, was any other than to put him into a way to get his Livelihood. And can thoſe be any longer called the Schools of the Prophets, which are turned into ſuch Sinks of all Lewdneſs and Debauchery; inſomuch that the Gentry of *England* begin to bethink themſelves of Academies and other ways of Education for their Sons, to avoid a place where only Poverty, and the want of opportunity to be vicious can ſecure from Vice? And how comes the Gift of underſtanding and interpreting the Scriptures to be found there more than in other places, when we ſee that thoſe who come from theſe Schools of the Prophets diſagree ſo much in their Sentiments, that by their different Expoſitions and Interpretations of Scripture, turning and winding it like a Noſe of Wax, they have ſet themſelves and the whole Kingdom together by the ears? Which makes it evident that no man who comes from thence is to be relied on as an infallible Interpreter; and without Infallibility all the Interpreters in *Europe* of the doubtful places of Scripture are not worth a ſtraw, ſeeing they may as ſoon be in the wrong as in the right: and that ſome of 'em muſt be in the wrong, we all know; but whether any of them be in the right, God knows.

As for the Ambaſſage they value themſelves upon, ſhould ſome great Prince ſend to a neighbouring State or Community, a pair of Ambaſſadors, who ſhould both have the ſame Inſtructions, but differed from each other in the meaning of them, ſo that one of them required one thing, and the other the quite contrary; I think no great heed ought to be given to either of them.

And as to the Myſteries of Religion, I confeſs they have

have made Chriſtianity it ſelf a Myſtery, which in all the Fundamentals of it is in the Scriptures made plain and eaſy to an ordinary Underſtanding. But the Lawyers do wiſely to interpret our Law in barbarous *French*, that no *Engliſh*-man but themſelves may underſtand it.

'Tis true, when Popery obtained among us, the caſe was not the ſame as now: For the Veneration then ſhewed to the Prieſt (admitting the then received Belief) was grounded upon great reaſon: for what could I think too much for him who with four words could make me a God and a Saviour, that could pen him up in a Box, and eat him at his pleaſure, and when that is done could with the ſame words make me another as good as the former; that could forgive me all my Sins, and if perchance I had not before my death ſcoured my Kettle ſo clean as I ſhould have done, ſo that I had the ill luck to drop into Purgatory, could ſing me out again, and by that means place me in a Station of eternal Bliſs? How would I crouch and cringe, kneel to and adore him who could do all this?

Theſe were great things, and yet no more than a Prieſt of the Church of *Rome* pretends to do. But alas, with us a Prieſt can do none of theſe Feats, but is deſpoiled of all theſe ſpiritual Plumes, and left as bare as the Bird in the Fable; not a Jack in a Box admitted among us, nor the Prieſt's Abſolution valued at a ruſh of late, unleſs at the Gallows; Purgatory hiſſed off the Stage, and reckoned at the worſt to be but ſome blind Ale-houſe between Heaven and Hell: And tho there is a Form of Abſolution, as full as any in the Popiſh Books, placed in a Corner of our Common-Prayer Book, at the end of the Viſitation of the Sick, to ſerve a turn, if occaſion be (which I never

think on, but it puts me in mind of *Littleton's* Chapter of *Continual Claim*) yet no Priest with us durst have the impudence at this time of day to affirm in his Pulpit, or any other publick place, that he hath power to forgive Sins, least the People should throw stones at him.

I doubt not but some (if they saw this Paper) would tell me that I have debased my Lords the Bishops. No such matter: They hold their Rank and Quality by their Baronages settled by the Law of the Land, and take their Places accordingly, and not by their Priesthood, and therefore are not within my aim or intention. But under that Degree there is no Law with us which gives precedence to a Clergyman, however dignified or distinguished, above him that is born a Gentleman: and a Clergy-man, under the degree of a Bishop, hath no more reason to pretend to any Place or Precedence, because 'tis possible he may come to be a Bishop, than a young sucking Barister hath to take place of his Betters, because 'tis possible he may come to be Lord Chancellor.

As for the other capacity of our Parish-Priest, Doctor in Divinity. The Gentlemen of *England* (that have any considerable Places) do seldom or never breed up their eldest Sons to the Priesthood, but commonly send them, and sometimes one of the younger Sons too (tho for the reason aforesaid, neither of them so much of late as formerly) to the Universities, and from thence (without staying there so long as to take any Degree) to the Inns of Court, where they do or ought to betake themselves to the study of our municipal Laws; and after 7 or 8 years are many of them called to the Bar, some with an intent to make

make the Law their Profeſſion, whereby they often double or treble their paternal Eſtates; and after 20 or 25 years firſt admittance into their reſpective Societies, are choſen of the Bench; and ſome of them afterwards (by the favour of the Prince) called to the State and Degree of Serjeant at Law, out of which number are choſen the Reverend Judges of the Realm. Others of theſe Inns of Court Gentlemen, after they are called to the Bar (and many of them before) depart into their own Countries, and by the knowledg they have acquired in the Law are rendred more ſerviceable to the Publick in the eminent Stations they are placed in there; where ſome of them match into great and honourable Families, others of them to rich and wealthy Heireſſes, and others of them to Women of conſiderable Fortunes in Money, ſufficient (without the aid of their own Eſtates) to buy all the Subſtance of ten Doctors in Divinity put together. Out of theſe ſeveral ſorts of Inns of Court Gentlemen, are for the moſt part choſen the Members of Parliament, High-Sheriffs, Deputy-Lieutenants, and Juſtices of Peace, who thus (next under the King) come to have the Legiſlative, Judicial, and Miniſterial Power of the Kingdom in their hands.

But if we will find the Pedegree of our Doctor in Divinity, we muſt ſtoop ſomewhat lower. If there be a younger Brother of any of theſe Families, he is commonly bound Apprentice to ſome Trade, or ſent to the Univerſity, which of them his Father, or (if dead) his other Friends think him moſt likely to thrive by. And here we have ſet our Doctor in the beſt Light. But it may be he is the Son of ſome Farmer, of ſome little Countrey Pedlar, of a Whitſter, Farrier,

Bricklayer, Plaiſterer, Carpenter, or (as in the caſe before us) of an Alehouſe-keeper; none of which ever arriv'd at the Honour of being covered before the Squire (as they call 'em in the Country) his Landlord, Maſter, or Cuſtomer, whom yet the Son of one of theſe Poultrons (having once got a red Hood about his Shoulders) would diſpute Precedence with.

And would it not be an agreeable ſight to ſee this Son of Gaffer what de'e call him, inſolently ſtep before a Perſon of Birth, Quality and Eſtate, merely becauſe he hath attained to the Preferment of an Ape, to be clad in Scarlet, while his Father works for his Living with his Leather Apron on, or with his Frock whiſtling to his Team, or with his blew Apron to receive the Droppings of the Tap (as in our caſe) and his Mother ſits at home mending of old Stockings. And if he were a poor Scholar, or of ſome Foundation in the Univerſity, what was he but a Porter or Serving-man in the firſt caſe, and an Alms-boy in the other caſe? For what difference is there between a Fellow or Scholar of a Foundation in a College, and another Alms-man or Alms-boy in an Hoſpital? Did not the Founders endow both out of Charity? Were they not both deſigned for the relief and maintenance of ſuch as have not to live of themſelves? And yet this little Monſieur, after he hath lived ſome time in his College upon Charity, and paſſed through ſome pedantick Formalities, which they call Degrees, muſt come into the Country, and perk above him to whom perchance he hath in the College ſerved up many a Diſh of Meat, and Meſs of Broth, or run on many an Errand for.

But we will ſuppoſe our Doctor a younger Son of ſome

ſome Gentleman of Quality, who was ſent to the Univerſity at fifteen, gets to be Maſter of Arts at twenty two, Bachelor of Divinity at twenty nine, and Doctor at thirty three; all which Degrees are conferred in the Univerſity, without reſpect to any extraordinary Merit, but as things of courſe. Here's a way found out for all younger Brothers (who are ſent to the Univerſity) to become better men at thirty three than their elder Brothers, and is a Cheat worſe than that put by *Rebecca* upon her Husband, to deprive her eldeſt Son of his Birthright. And if the Gentlemen of *England* (notwithſtanding their Eyes are commonly thought to be pretty well cleared of the Miſts of Popery, from whence this Prieſt-worſhip firſt took its riſe) were not ſtill as blind as *Iſaac*, they would diſcern how they are Prieſtridden and abuſed in this matter as well as in many others: for what is it to the Gentlemen of *England*, what a parcel of petty ſtarch'd Fellows, the Dregs and Offals of Monkery, who live upon Chops of Mutton, do among themſelves? Or how are the Body of the *Engliſh* Nation concerned whether they make one another Doctors, Patriarchs or Mufti's? Let them ſtrut it about the Streets of *Oxford* and *Cambridg*, and look big upon the cowed Townſmen, and crow upon their own Dunghils there; but when they come abroad among Gentlemen, let them remember the meanneſs either of their Birth or Education, or perhaps both, and know their diſtance when they meet with thoſe who are above them in every reſpect.

But ſuppoſe we ſhould give ſome grains of allowance to our Doctor in Divinity or Pariſh-Prieſt, and humour him a little; what is that to Mrs. *Abigail*, who

makes

makes a Figure of no long ſtanding? For ſo lately as it King *Harry* the Eighth's Reign, the Wife of a Prieſt was

Rara avis in terris, nigroq; ſimillima cygno.

'Tis true *Cranmer*, in thoſe days, when he was a Student at *Cambridg*, married an Innkeeper's Daughter there (which gave occaſion to the Papiſts to ſay he was an Hoſtler) and after he was Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, kept her privately ſometimes at *Lambeth*. In imitation whereof a late Archbiſhop kept his Wife there too, privately enough, tho not ſo privately as the other. But that of *Cranmer* was a rare inſtance in thoſe times; and when in K. *Edward* the Sixth's Reign the Clergy began frequently to marry, and in Q. *Elizabeth*'s Reign continued ſo to do by colour of the Statutes of 2 & 3 *E.* 6. which permitted them to marry, and 5 & 6 *E.* 6. which declared their Children legitimate (altho by the way thoſe two Statutes were repealed by 1 *Mar.* and never revived till 1 *Jac.* 1.) the Gentlemen of *England* looked on the Marriage of a Prieſt as ſo ſcandalous a thing, that they thought ſcorn to beſtow their Daughters or Kinſwomen upon them; ſo that the Pariſh-Prieſts were fain for a long time to take up with the Daughters of the meaneſt of the People, my Lady's Chamber-maid being accounted a great Booty in thoſe days. And theſe Eccleſiaſtical Doxys kept themſelves a long time within the Bounds of Modeſty, and imployed themſelves at their Wheel or Needle, or in the getting in the Tithe-eggs, and ſuch like, without pretending to any place or precedence, any further than before the Farmers Wives of the Pariſh, and not thoſe neither, if rich

and

and wealthy; nor knew any thing beyond a black ſtuff Gown on Sundays, and a green Apron when they went abroad on working days. And when ſome of them, eſpecially the Wives of thoſe they called the dignified Clergy, grew malapert, and raiſed Diſputes about Place, Q. *Elizabeth* being asked what place was due to a Clergy-man's Wife, anſwered truly and diſcreetly, *Behind the door.* So that in her time they were kept pretty well down, and made no ſuch buſtles as they have done ſince.

And tho I am not againſt a Prieſt's having a comfortable Importance as well as other men, yet 'tis obſervable, that when towards the latter end of that Queen's Reign theſe She-Comforts grew proud and troubleſom, the whole courſe of the Clergy's way of living became quite altered. For whereas before, the Clergy and their Wives were very charitable to their Neighbors, eſpecially the Poor, whom they daily reliev'd; when once Pride and Affectation had crept in among the Wives, which could not be ſupported without extraordinary expence, and a more chargeable Education than formerly was beſtowed on their Offspring, which ſeldom failed to be numerous, the Charity of the Clergy ceaſed, and all was ſpent on themſelves, their Wives and Children, and the Poor were ready to be ſtarved: which was the occaſion of making the Statute of 43 *Eliz.* for relief of the Poor, being the firſt Statute Law which was ever made of that nature and comprehenſion, and was not chiefly occaſioned, as ſome think, by the diſſolution of Monaſteries; for the Clergy long after that reliev'd the Poor of their Pariſhes and Diſtricts to that degree, that there was no need of any ſuch Law: And ſo indeed it ought to have continued; for tho what

what they diſtributed was upon pretence of Charity, yet it was no more than what was the Poors due, the Goods of the Church being the Poors, as was expreſly determin'd by the 2*d* Council of *Ravenna*, by which and ſeveral other Councils, it was provided that the Poor ſhould be maintained by the Clergy. And there is a Canon extant, which enjoins the Clergy to ſet apart the third of the profits of their Benefices for the relief of the Poor. And ſeeing the Clergy ſtand ſo ſtrictly upon other Canons which make for their Profit, Authority, and Advantage, 'tis pity but this Canon ſhould be put in ure, which would keep the Prieſts (and conſequently their Wives) in a ſtate of Humility more becoming the Goſpel, and would be ſo plentiful a relief to the Poor, that there would need (as a certain Lord Mayor expreſſed himſelf when he whipt the Beggars) no complaining in our Streets.

But to leave this digreſſion: When in ſome of the later Reigns Debauchery and Lewdneſs were incouraged, and made a ſtep to Preferment, eſpecially after the Reſtoration in 1660. when the Gentlemen of the Royal Party, who had ſtrugled through their Sequeſtrations, Impriſonments, Decimations, *&c.* under the then late uſurped Powers, and had notwithſtanding all thoſe Difficulties preſerved their Eſtates entire, or not much impaired them, ran ſtark mad for joy, and either out of the vain hopes of Court-Preferment, or to comply with their own Inclinations, had many of them run into ſuch a courſe of Extravagancy, as quickly conſumed the Eſtates of ſome of them, and placed others of them in a meaner condition than they could probably have been reduced to, had their former Perſecutions continued; ſo that all they got by the Reſto-

Reſtoration was the honour of ſpending their Eſtates themſelves; and this extravagant humour had ſpread it ſelf much further, and become almoſt univerſal. And on the other hand, our Clergy rode triumphant, and heaped to themſelves Benefice upon Benefice, and Preferment upon Preferment; ſo that he who had either Wit, Money, or Friends, could hardly miſs of making a conſiderable Figure in a ſhort time: and having quite left off the ſour Humour and Looks which were heretofore peculiar to the Eccleſiaſticks, and were then called Gravity, and no more appeared with their Hair cropp'd above their Ears, nor with their black ſattin and white-lac'd turn'd-up Caps; but adapted themſelves to the gay and frank Humour of the Times, and with the help of a Jauntee Wig, curl'd and poudered alamode, and a few Grimaces, skrewed themſelves into the good Graces of the young Ladies: Then happy was he who had but 3 or 4 or 500 *l.* to give with his Daughter, or had reſerved an Advowſon among the Reliques of a broken Fortune in order to ſome Smock Symony, who could marry his Daughter into the Tribe of *Levi*. And by this means ſeveral of them have gotten into Alliances with tolerable Families, and others of them (tho but a few) have made a higher ſtep.

Theſe Madames thus diſpoſed of, retaining a ſmatch of the Haughtineſs of the Families from whence they are ſprung, are never at reſt till their Husbands commence Doctors, that they may place themſelves above all other Women under the degree of a Knight's Wife; for that is what they pretend to.

But how long hath this been their due? They cannot claim it by Cuſtom, or Preſcription time out of

mind; for *Edward* the Sixth's Reign, when the Clergy were permitted to marry, is within time of memory; and for many hundred years before there was not a married Prieſt in *England*, unleſs by ſtealth, as in the caſe of *Cranmer*. When therefore did this right of Precedence firſt accrue to them? and where? Not behind the door I hope.

If then there be no ſuch Cuſtom or Preſcription, there muſt be ſome poſitive Law to give or aſſert this Right, or the Court of Honour muſt have decided it: but our Legiſlators had ſomewhat elſe to do than to trouble themſelves with Mrs. *Abigail*; nor would they in all the long Reign of Q. *Elizabeth*, ſo much as make her Marriage lawful, or her Children legitimate, by repealing the ſaid Statute of 1 *Mar.* And the Court of Honour had more reſpect for the Gentlemen of Families and Eſtates, than to ſubject their Wives to the Daughter of a Beggar, or to *Abigail* the Waiting-woman, or *Joan* the Chamber-maid.

The Biſhops are Barons of the Realm, and take their places above all of the Degree only of Temporal Barons; and yet the Lady of a Temporal Baron, nay of a Baronet, nay more of a Knight (altho her Huſband's Dignity is not deſcendible to her Children) is acknowledged by all to have precedence before the Wife of a Biſhop: and one reaſon is, becauſe (as I ſaid before of the Doctor's Wife) a Biſhop's Wife being but of later date, cannot challenge ſuch precedence by Cuſtom or Preſcription: nor was the point ever determined for her in the Court of Honour.

'Tis true, about 60 years ſince, when no Woman under the degree of a Knight's Wife was called Madam or my Lady, there was one *Pierce*, Biſhop of *Bath* and

and *Wells* (who lived to be reſtored in 1660. and then betook himſelf only to Suppers, leſt any Gentleman or Clergyman of the Country ſhould come to dine with him) would needs have thoſe two Appellations given to his Wife, which ſome complied with, to flatter him; others refus'd, to vex him; while all laughed at him for expecting it.

Now if the Precedence which a Biſhop hath cannot affect the Biſhop's Wife, or place her in a ſtation ſutable to that of her Husband, much leſs can this empty Title of Doctor affect the Doctor's Wife, or place her in a higher rank than ſhe was in before; but ſhe remains ſtill the Parſon's or Vicar's Wife of the Pariſh, and no more.

But ſhe may (for the moſt part) thank the vain-glorious Fool her Husband for this piece of Pride and Inſolence, who hath filled her Head with the airy notion of his Doctorſhip, and hath put her into a Garb fitter for a man's Wife of 2000 *l. per annum*, than for the Wife of a Pariſh-Prieſt, whoſe Benefices die with him: She muſt be arrayed (contrary to the Modeſty and Gravity of the Wives of Q. *Elizabeth*'s Clergy) in all the Colours of the Rainbow, with a Head as high as the late Porter at the New Exchange, with a Footboy or two at her heels, and a Coach or Calaſh it may be into the bargain; but when the Parſon dies, down goes all this: She then lives upon ſome little Pittance, or perhaps becomes that which they call a diſtreſſed Miniſter's Widow, and an Object of (what ſhe was a ſtranger to in her Husband's Life-time) Charity. And this often happens where the Parſon lives up to the height of his Income, and conſumes it upon the Pride and Luxury of himſelf and his Doxy.

But

But I will no longer detain you, altho much more might be said upon this Subject, if Time (or rather if the Times) would permit.

I am, *&c.*

FINIS.

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